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This rhyme furnishes a curious example of the continual admixture and degradation incident to children's songs. The essential feature is found in the third stanza, which condenses into three lines a history formerly much more elaborated; thus at the beginning of the century the verse went: —

He knocks at the door and picks up a pin,  
And asks if Miss — is in.

"She neither is in, she neither is out,  
She's in the garret a-walking about."

Down she comes, as white as milk,  
A rose in her bosom as soft as silk.

She takes off her gloves and shows me a ring:  
To-morrow, to-morrow, the wedding begins.

The verse bears marks of antiquity. Instead of the words "picks up a pin," originally must have stood "pulls at the pin," according to ancient ballad phraseology. The idea of the story is not clear, but obviously refers to the reappearance of a long-lost lover; recognition is effected in the usual manner by means of a ring. The "garret" here takes the place of the "high-loft" in Scandinavian antiquity; the upper story, in every considerable house, contained the apartments of the family. According to what appears to have been an ancient practice, the ballad was preceded by a game-rhyme. The song, "Little Sally Waters," was used in this way in order to determine the heroine; the words, "Water, water, wildflowers," show a confusion resulting from this combination. In England, we find the line running, "Willy, willy, wallflower;" a Philadelphia variant has "Lily, lily, white flower." The fourth and fifth stanzas, again, belong to a separate game; it was an ancient piece of satire that the illnesses of young women were best treated by the prescription of a lover. Finally, the last lines belong to an old Halloween rhyme: —

And if my love be clad in gray,  
His love for me is far away;  
But if my love be clad in blue,  
His love for me is very true.

(See "Games and Songs of American Children," Nos. 12, 13, 35, 36.)

*W. W. Newell.*

A DANCE-RHYME OF CHILDREN IN BROOKLYN, N. Y. — A circle having been formed, the children move slowly, singing as follows: —

Mamma bought me a pincushion, pincushion, pincushion,  
Mamma bought me a pincushion,  
One, two, three.

At the words, "One, two, three," the children break the circle; each claps hands and turns once round. (This movement appears to make the charm of the game.) The song then proceeds, with repetition, as in the first stanza: —

What did Mamma pay for it?  
 Paid with Papa's feather-bed.  
 What will Papa sleep on?  
 Sleep on the washtub.  
 What will Mamma wash in?  
 Wash in a thimble.  
 What will Mamma sew with?  
 Sew with a poker.  
 What will Mamma poke with?  
 Poke with her finger.  
 Supposing Mamma burns herself?

This is the end. Imagination apparently fails to answer the last question.

*May Ovington.*

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

The song is a corruption of that belonging to the English game of "Milking-pails." In this amusement, a mother is confronted by a row of daughters, who announce:—

Mary's gone a-milking,  
 Mother, mother;  
 Mary's gone a-milking,  
 Gentle, sweet mother of mine.

The mother then bids the child, "Take your pails and follow;" whereon the disobedient daughter asks her to "buy me a pair of new milking-pails." The question is then asked, "Where's the money to come from?" whereon the reply is, that it may be obtained by selling the father's feather-bed, and a dialogue follows similar to that above printed. The washtub being sold, it will be necessary to wash in the river; in that case the clothes may be carried away, and the mother will be obliged to follow in a boat; the conclusion is, "Suppose the boat should be upset?" "Then that would be the end of you." A variant requires the mother to swim after the clothes. The fun consists in the pursuit of the unmannerly children, and their punishment. The game does not seem of very ancient character, and apparently has only been played in America in consequence of importation by recent immigrants. (See "Traditional Games," by Alice B. Gomme, London, 1894, pp. 376-388.)

*W. W. A.*

NEGRO SUPERSTITIONS OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN.—The farther proceeds the collection of negro superstitions in America, the more clearly it appears that a great part of their beliefs and tales are borrowed from the whites. In the preceding number of this *Journal* (p. 228) it has been remarked that a particularly primitive superstition, according to which it is believed that the "trick bone" of a black cat confers the gift of invisibility, is identical with that of Canadian Germans; in both cases the belief has led